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RUEHTM
DE RUEHCV #1489/01 3242059
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O R 202059Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0040
INFO WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 001489

SIPDIS

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN PASS TO AMEMBASSY GRENADA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PASS TO AMCONSUL QUEBEC
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PASS TO AMCONSUL RECIFE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/11/20

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: Students Occupy Embassies; Plan Second Hunger Strike

REF: 09 CARACAS 1389; 09 CARACAS 1292; 09 CARACAS 1279
09 CARACAS 1188

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CLASSIFIED BY: duddy, ambassador, dos, amb; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

11. (C) On November 19 student activist Julio Rivas told Polcouns and Human Rights Officer that students would convene a demonstration in Caracas on November 21 in which they would announce their initiation of a second round of political actions, to include a hunger strike by about 50 students in front of the OAS Mission; protests at the Brazilian, Peruvian, and other selected diplomatic missions; and a march by university students from the eastern part of the country to Caracas. Rivas said their one demand would be that the Government of Venezuela (GBRV) allow the OAS Inter American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH) to visit Venezuela. (Note: Since 2002, the GBRV has repeatedly refused to permit such a visit and has attacked CIDH Executive Secretary Canton for his alleged support for the 2002 coup. End Note.) Rivas said the students planned to maintain the hunger strike as long as necessary to achieve their demand for a CIDH visit. He said this wave of protest actions was timed to coincide with the anniversary of the November 21, 1957, student strike at the Universidad Central de Venezuela that led to the overthrow of the dictatorship of Marcos Perez Jimenez in January 1958 (Ref A). Rivas requested that the U.S. issue a statement in support of a CIDH visit, and said other countries, perhaps including Guatemala, Peru and Panama, might issue such statements.

12. (C) Later in the afternoon of November 19, Embassy learned that small groups of students had entered the Peruvian, Spanish, Chilean, Panamanian, Colombian, Costa Rican, and Czech Embassies and were refusing to leave. One Embassy source reported that student groups were physically pushed out of the Peruvian and Spanish Embassies. (Note: Rivas had made no mention of these planned actions during his meeting with Polcouns and Human Rights Officer.) A text message from Julio Rivas said that he was outside the Colombian Embassy and that the occupations ("tomas") of the embassies were continuing. The Czech Consul told Polcouns that two students had entered the Embassy on the pretext of needing information for a visit to the Czech Republic and then presented a petition making political demands that were "broader than simply a request for a CIDH visit." They were urgently consulting with Prague on their response.

13. (C) Follow-Up on Student Delegation Visit to Washington: Since Rivas' return from his visit to OAS headquarters in Washington, he has not been subjected to physical harassment or legal charges, but has been subjected to a smear campaign in

pro-government media outlets. He noted that some lesser profile students have had their homes raided by suspected DISIP officials. While Rivas was in the Embassy, Post's security team noted a suspicious man on a motorcycle driving by the Embassy multiple times and told poloff that "it was as if he were watching or waiting for someone." Post security assisted Rivas in departing the building without incident.

Sensitivity:

Sensitive

Classification:

CONFIDENTIAL

Classified by:

DUDDY, AMBASSADOR, AMB, DOS

Reason:

1.4(b), (d)

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Declassify On:

2034/11/19
DUDDY